

BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

You have a place here!

*"Joyfully we profess our faith through God's unconditional love.
Here and now God dwells in all of our lives,
bears our sins on the cross, and forgives us all."*

25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

9:00 am Sunday, November 19, 2023

Pastor David Johnson



TODAY'S REFLECTION

Our readings during November speak of the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the Lord will be filled with wrath and distress. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ's coming among us.

All baptized and confessing believers are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

*We hope that your worship experience is spiritually fulfilling
and your day begins with our Lord's gifts of peace and joy*

▼ **Prelude Reflections for Meditation**

▼ **Welcome Greeting—Prayers and Praises**

▲ **Opening Hymn**

“Gather Us In” page 9

▲ **Confession & Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity,
† one God, in whose image we are made,
who claims us and calls us beloved. **Amen.**

Silence for Reflection

Holy One,
**we confess that we are not awake for you.
We are not faithful in using your gifts.
We forget the least of our siblings.
We do not see your beautiful image in one another.
We are infected by sin that divides your beloved community.
Open our hearts to your coming,
open our eyes to see you in our neighbor,
open our hands to serve your creation. Amen.**

Beloved, we are God's children,
and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us.
Through † Jesus you are forgiven,
by Jesus you are welcome,
in Jesus you are called to rejoice!
Let us live in the promises prepared for us
from the foundation of the world. **Amen.**

▲ Prayer of the Day

Righteous God,
our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

THE WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song

▼ God's Word from the Scriptures (NRSV)

The First Reading is from Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is at hand; the Lord has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests. At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, "The Lord will not do good, nor will he do harm." Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the Lord, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

▼ God's Word from the Psalms (NRSV)

Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals."

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning;
in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

For we are consumed by your anger; by your wrath we are overwhelmed.

**You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.**

[For all our days pass away under your wrath; our years come to an end like a sigh.

The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

Who considers the power of your anger?

Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.]

So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

▼ **God's Word from the Scriptures (NRSV)**

The Second Reading is from 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.

So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

▲ **God's Word from the Gospel (NRSV)**

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 25:14-30

Glory to you, O Lord.

"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who

had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

▼ **Sermon—God's Word Applied to Life**

▼ **Hymn of the Day**

"Freely, Freely" page 10

▲ **The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

▲ **Prayers of the Church**

Let us approach the Throne of Grace, there to pray for the Church, the world, and one another.

A brief silence.

Father, thank you for entrusting to us the treasures of your Kingdom and the gifts of your Holy Spirit.

Thank you for your confidence in us – for commending wise risk taking and condemning fearful inaction. Give us grace to be faithful stewards of your bounty, to your glory and for the good of your people.

Lord, in your mercy, **please hear our prayer.**

Give your Church pastors, bishops, and theologians who faithfully proclaim your Word of Law and Gospel. Make the Church shine with the holiness and humility of Jesus, guiding many to seek his promised forgiveness and salvation.

Lord, in your mercy, **please hear our prayer.**

Let the faithful witness of your suffering Church be a beacon of hope for all who love Christ, and into an urgent warning to all who hate him. We can scarcely comprehend the suffering of our persecuted sisters and brothers. Give us the willingness to defend and provide for them as we can, and to adorn their sacrifices with our smaller acts of faith and love.

Lord, in your mercy, **please hear our prayer.**

Make this congregation into a “Discipleship Boot Camp!” Teach us to practice taking risks in your service. Make us bold in granting forgiveness – or asking for it. Make us brave in talking about the hope that is in us. Make us fearless in shining the light of Jesus’ love into sin-darkened lives. Make us ingenious in easing the burdens of others for whom he gave his life.

Lord, in your mercy, **please hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have been richly blessed with skills of mind and hand, and gifts of imagination and wise judgment. Guide them in using their gifts to your glory and for the benefit of others. We also pray for those whose talents seem meager; who are afraid to use them; or are convinced they are worthless. Give them the grace to value what you have given them, and to use all their resources to their utmost. Help all of us to risk much as we seek to please you, help our neighbor, and heal our world. Remind us that you have prepared for us joys that are infinitely greater than any treasure we lay at your feet.

Lord, in your mercy, **please hear our prayer.**

Give teachable minds and willing hearts to the leaders of the nations. Remind them that they must give you an account of their stewardship of power, authority, and talents. Do not let them squander these gifts through hard hearts, rivalries, misuse, or disuse. Give to each of us the gifts of kindness, humility, and generosity, so that all our lives may be touched by happiness and brightened by hope.

Lord, in your mercy, **please hear our prayer.**

Great gifts are needed by those who risk their lives to protect the lives and liberty of others. Abundantly grant them all they need, dear Lord. Use their skills to bring calm in chaos, and justice in troubled places. Shield their loved ones from fear; and bring them home safely and soon.

Lord, in your mercy, **please hear our prayer.**

We beseech you to come speedily to the rescue of all who cry out for healing of body, mind, heart or spirit – *especially for those we name before you now (either in silence or out loud)*. Deliver them from their afflictions, and restore them to the fellowship of all who care for them.

Lord, in your mercy, **please hear our prayer.**

Keep in your sheltering arms all those who have died trusting in your promises. And as you have called us to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils

unknown, we pray: Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only ⁷ that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, until you bring us home, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, **please hear our prayer.**

Hear our prayer; and graciously grant all that glorifies you and benefits our poor broken world, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

▲ **Sharing of the Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Greet each other with a sign of Christ's peace.

THE MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

▼ **Offering and Presentation of the Gifts**

October—December Mission Designation

Adopt-A-Family/Senior

▼ **Offering Prayer**

God of all goodness,
**generations have turned to you, gathered around your table,
and shared your abundant blessings.**

**Number us among them, that as we gather these gifts from your abundance,
and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self
and care for all that you have made,
through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant. Amen.**

▼ **The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution**

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup,
gave thanks, gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you
and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

▼ **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

▼ **Invitation and Distribution of Communion**

There is a place for you at the banquet. Come and feast at Jesus' table.

▼ **Post Communion Blessing**

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in His grace until He comes again.
In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

▼ **Post Communion Prayer**

Lord Jesus,
in this simple meal you have set a banquet. Sustain us on the journey,
strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children,
and give us glad and generous hearts as we meet you on the way. **Amen.**

THE SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

▼ **Closing Hymn**

"Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow" page 11

▼ **Announcements**

Anyone is welcome to make announcements at this time.

▲ **Blessing and Dismissal**

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.
In the name of the Father and the † Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Beloved of God,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Gather Us In

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
 Music: GATHER US IN, Marty Haugen
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1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark - ness
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys - t'ry, we are the old who
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa - ter, here we will take the
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con - fin - ing, not in some heav - en,



van - ished a - way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings
 yearn for your face; we have been sung through - out all of his - t'ry,
 bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daugh - ters,
 light years a - way— here in this place the new light is shin - ing,



brought here to you in the light of this day.
 called to be light to the whole hu - man race.
 call us a - new to be salt for the earth.
 now is the king - dom, and now is the day.



Gath - er us in, the lost and for - sak - en, gath - er us in, the
 Gath - er us in, the rich and the haugh - ty, gath - er us in, the
 Give us to drink the wine of com - pas - sion, give us to eat the
 Gath - er us in and hold us for - ev - er, gath - er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a - wak - en,
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low - ly,
 bread that is you; nour - ish us well, and teach us to fash - ion
 make us your own; gath - er us in, all peo - ples to - geth - er,



we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.
 give us the cour - age to en - ter the song.
 lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.
 fire . . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

Freely Freely

Words and Music by
Carol Owens

♩ = 100

VERSE

D (A) Bm⁷ Em⁷ A⁷ Em⁷



1. God for - gave my sin in Je - sus' name, I've been born a -
2. All ___ pow'r is giv'n in Je - sus' name, In ___ earth and

6 A⁷ (A/G) D/F# A⁷ D G D/F# Em⁷ A/C#



-gain in Je - sus' name; And in Je - sus' name I come to
heav'n in Je - sus' name; And in Je - sus' name I come to

12 D D (Em⁷(4)) D/F# G A^{sus} A⁷ D G/A A⁷ D



you to share His love as He told me to: He said, "Free - ly
you to share His pow'r as He told me to:

CHORUS

18 Em⁷ A A⁷ D G/A



free - ly, you have re - ceived. Free - ly, free - ly give; _____

25 D Em⁷ A



Go in My name and be - cause you be - lieve,

29 A⁷ D



oth - ers will know that I live." _____

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and homophonic, consisting of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all
 crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
 heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church

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MORE SPECIAL WAYS TO GIVE THROUGH YOUR TIME AND TALENTS

Sunday Worship Lectors and Communion Assistants are needed
Service Assistant to advance projected bulletin slides
Maintenance chores around the facility
Christian Education Volunteers

BETHANY WEEKLY EVENTS CALENDAR

Sunday	9:00 am Worship, in the Great Room and Facebook Live-Stream/Video
Tuesday	9:00 am Community Coffee in Great Room 9:00 am Cover Girls in Classroom
Wednesday	10:00 am Women's Bible Study via ZOOM 6:00 pm Confirmation Class (begins September 20) 7:00 pm Joint Mid-Week Service
Thursday	7:00 am Men's Breakfast and Bible Study in Great Room 10:00 am Women's Bible Study in Conference Room 6:30 pm Pub Theology at the Big 10 Quinnesec

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